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10/582,192	02/12/2007	Adrian Blair Gardiner	1209.75321	2192
24978 GREER, BURN	7590 09/08/201 <b>IS &amp; CRAIN</b>	EXAMINER		
300 S WACKE 25TH FLOOR		NICONOVICH, ALEXANDER R		
	CHICAGO, IL 60606			PAPER NUMBER
			3711	
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			09/08/2010	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

	Application No.	Applicant(s)				
	10/582,192	GARDINER, ADRIAN BLAIR				
Office Action Summary	Examiner	Art Unit				
	ALEXANDER R. NICONOVICH	3711				
The MAILING DATE of this communication app	pears on the cover sheet with the c	orrespondence address				
Period for Reply	VIO OET TO EVOIDE AMONTHY	O) OD THIRTY (O) BANG				
A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DA.  - Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.1: after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.  - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period variety or period for reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).	ATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION 36(a). In no event, however, may a reply be tin will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from , cause the application to become ABANDONE	N. nely filed the mailing date of this communication. D (35 U.S.C. § 133).				
Status						
1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 A	ugust 2010.					
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •						
3) Since this application is in condition for allowar	Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is					
closed in accordance with the practice under E	Ex parte Quayle, 1935 C.D. 11, 45	53 O.G. 213.				
Disposition of Claims						
• 4)⊠ Claim(s) <u>14-57,59 and 60</u> is/are pending in the application.						
4a) Of the above claim(s) <u>50-57</u> is/are withdrawn from consideration.						
5) Claim(s) is/are allowed.						
6)⊠ Claim(s) <u>14-49,59 and 60</u> is/are rejected.						
7) Claim(s) is/are objected to.						
8) Claim(s) are subject to restriction and/o	r election requirement.					
Application Papers						
9) The specification is objected to by the Examine	r.					
10)⊠ The drawing(s) filed on <u>09 June 2006</u> is/are: a)⊠ accepted or b)□ objected to by the Examiner.						
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).						
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).						
11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Ex	caminer. Note the attached Office	Action or form PTO-152.				
Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119						
12)⊠ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign	priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)	)-(d) or (f).				
a)⊠ All b)□ Some * c)□ None of:						
1.⊠ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.						
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No						
3. Copies of the certified copies of the prior	•	ed in this National Stage				
application from the International Bureau		A				
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list	or the certified copies not receive	u.				
Attachment(s)	_					
Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)     Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	4) ☐ Interview Summary Paper No(s)/Mail Da					
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date	5) Notice of Informal P					

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#### **DETAILED ACTION**

## Response to Amendment

1. In an amendment filed 8/27/10, Applicant has amended claims 14 and 60, cancelled claims 1-13 and 58, and claims 50-57 remain withdrawn for being related to an unelected invention. This amendment is acknowledged. Claims 14-49 and 59-60 remain pending.

# Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

- 2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:
  - The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
- 3. Claims 14 and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
- 4. Regarding claims 14 and 60, the term "may" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitation(s) following the term are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).
- 5. Claim 60 recites the limitation "each pair of neighboring lanes" in line 12. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

# Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

6. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

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Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

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7. Claims 14-49 and 59-60 are rejected under 35 USC 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter because these are method or process claims that do not transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing, nor are they tied to another statutory class (such as a particular machine). See Diamond v. Diehr, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981) (quoting Benson, 409 U.S. at 70); Parker v. Flook, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978) (citing Cochrane v. Deener, 94 U.S. 780, 787-88 (1876)). See also In re Comiskey, 499 F.3d 1365, 1376 (Fed. Cir. 2007) (request for rehearing en banc pending). The current claims fail to require that 1) the method be implemented by a particular machine (the method is not implemented by a machine, it is simply played on the court and further, playing court is not a particular machine (a concrete thing consisting of parts)) and 2) the method particularly transform a particular article (there is no transformation of an article, such as the ground, in the claims). Based upon consideration of all of the relevant factors with respect to the claim as a whole, claim(s) 14-49 and 59-60 held to claim an abstract idea, and is/are therefore rejected as ineligible subject matter under 35 U.S.C. 101. The rationale for this finding is explained below: the limitations of the claims fail to pass the machine transformation test. The ground that the game is played on is not transformed or changed to a different state or condition as it is still simply a ground surface.

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# Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

- (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.
- 9. Claims 14-20, 22, 24, 27-29, 31, 33-38, 41, 43-49, and 59-60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wikipedia ("Fencing" 6/31/06).

Wikipedia1 teaches:

#### In Reference to Claims 14

A method of playing a team combat sport (team fencing, "Team events" page 12) wherein: each team includes two or more players who combats one another contemporaneously to achieve an objective (players from each team combat to strike the players of the other team to earn points over the course of a match, in collegiate fencing page 14, teams or schools compete against each other at one time); the teams combat each other within a single predetermined game area (match takes place in a gym with multiple pistes, or a single piste, page 6) using at least one hand-to-hand weapon (swords: foil, epee, and sabre, pages 3-5) to achieve the objective of hitting out an opposing player by using the weapon to strike a pressure pad in a target area on an opposing player until all the opposing team players are hit out ("Electronic scoring equipment', pages 8-10); the play further including: a single player may

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challenge or be challenged contemporaneously by one or more opponents in a single game (players from each team challenge and combat each other on the single or multiple pistes); and the game area comprises at least two physical playing regions having non-contacting boundaries including a first playing region having one or more defined game play areas, and a second larger playing region defining a further game play area (players begin inside two meters from the midpoint (en-garde lines) of the piste and may later move along the remainder of the piste; page 6) wherein the horizontal end line boundaries of each zone do not contact each other). Also, if multiple pistes are used in the gym area they would comprise multiple play areas that had non-contacting boundaries.

Wikipedia fails to specifically teach gym housing multiple piste areas; however it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have provided multiple pistes in the gym area so that multiple combats could take place simultaneously in order to shorten the length of the overall match. Further, using multiple pistes in a gym simultaneously is practiced and is commonly seen on college campuses so that multiple players may combat at the same time, especially in practice sessions. Further it would have been obvious to have utilized multiple piste areas as it has been held that the mere duplication of essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co., 193 USPQ 8.

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### In Reference to Claim 60

A method of playing a team combat sport (fencing) wherein: a player on a first team combats a second team to achieve an objective (players combat to strike the other); wherein the player combats the second team within a predetermined game area (combat in a gym area with a piste area) using at least one hand-to-hand weapon (swords: foil, epee, and sabre, pages 3-5) to achieve the objective of hitting out an opposing player on the second team by using the weapon to strike a pressure pad in a target area on an opposing player until all the opposing team players on the second team are hit out (players combat until the other is hit out using "Electronic scoring equipment', pages 8-10); the play further including: the player may challenge one or more opponents on the second team in a single game (players play one other player in each game and players generally play against multiple players on another team within a match); and the game area comprises rectangular-shaped lanes.

Wikipedia fails to specifically teach gym housing multiple piste areas; however it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have provided multiple pistes in the gym area so that multiple combats could take place simultaneously in order to shorten the length of the overall match. Further, using multiple pistes in a gym simultaneously is practiced and is commonly seen on college campuses so that multiple players may combat at the same time, especially in practice sessions. Further it would have been obvious to have

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utilized multiple piste areas as it has been held that the mere duplication of essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co., 193 USPQ 8.

#### In Reference to Claim 15

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein the objective is to hit out a key player or key players on the opposing team (player currently playing).

#### In Reference to Claim 16

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein the objective is to hit out all of the players on the opposing team (points rewarded for hitting out players, most points win).

#### In Reference to Claim 17

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein players aim to hit a target area on an opposing player wherein the target area is selected from: the whole body; the head; the torso; the upper body; the arms; the legs; the lower body; the groin; the back; at least one shoulder; a pressure pad or pads; and combinations thereof (different target areas for different weapons, pages 4-5. Electronic equipment pages 8-10).

#### In Reference to Claim 18

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A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein multiple rounds are played, each round being complete once the objective is achieved (multiple rounds, rounds end once the amount of points are achieved, "Team events" page 12).

#### In Reference to Claim 19

A method as claimed in claim 18 as rejected above and wherein after each round, players in each team rotate position and a new player or players become the key player or players (players rotate each round, "Team events" page 12).

# In Reference to Claim 20

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein the combat is scored using methods selected from the group consisting of: the team that achieves the objective scores a point or points (legal hits are points); the team that wins the highest number rounds is the winner wherein each objective achieved is counted as one round (first team to win 5 matches wins, each rounds counts as a point, page 13); the team that wins the highest number of rounds after a set period of time where as many rounds as fit into that time period are completed and wherein each objective achieved is counted as one round; and combinations thereof ("Team events" page 12-13).

In Reference to Claim 22

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein if a player

is hit out, that player remains idle (round is over, but player can play next

round).

In Reference to Claim 24

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein if a player

is hit incorrectly or unfairly they may continue to participate in the combat

(only legal hits count as points).

In Reference to Claim 27

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein pressure

pads are used for registering hits, located on or approximate to key target

areas on the player including the head, shoulders and chest (scoring

areas, pages 4-5, electronic equipment pages 8-10).

In Reference to Claim 28

A method as claimed in claim 27 as rejected above and wherein, when a

pressure point is hit, a visual and/or audio cue is emitted (lights signal

touches, page 9).

# In Reference to Claim 29

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein each team includes at least three players (3 per team, page 12).

### In Reference to Claim 31

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein each team includes at least one forward player, at least one back player and at least one key player (teams consist of three players, one of which can be a "forward player", one a "back player", and one a "key player"). Further, any player can be designated as forward, back, or key players since there is no further limiting feature that distinguishes the player titles.

#### In Reference to Claim 33

A method as claimed in claim 31 as rejected above and wherein the movement of each player is defined by their designation selected from: forward player, back player, key player (each player is restricted to the piste).

### In Reference to Claim 34

A method as claimed in claim 31 as rejected above and wherein forward players may initially move only within a restricted area within the game area (all players can only move within piste aisle, page 6).

In Reference to Claim 35

A method as claimed in claim 34 as rejected above and wherein the

restricted area is a lane approximately 10 meters long and 1 meter wide

(Page 6).

In Reference to Claim 36

A method as claimed in claim 34 as rejected above and wherein, if a

forward player steps out of the restricted area before they hit out their

opponent, then they are hit out themselves (point given when other player

goes beyond the back edge of the game area, page 8).

In Reference to Claim 37

A method as claimed in claim 34 as rejected above and wherein, once a

forward player hits out their opposing forward player, they can then move

out of the restricted area (once a player strike another the round is over

and they can move outside the piste).

In Reference to Claim 38

A method as claimed in claim 31 as rejected above and wherein back

players may move any where within the game area however they must

start at a predetermined fixed point within the game area (all players start at the same spot, after which they can move within the piste area).

## In Reference to Claim 41

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein an automatic hit out occurs on any player if that player steps outside of the overall game area at any point of the game (point given when other player goes beyond the back edge of the game area, page 8).

#### In Reference to Claim 43

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein hits are judged visually (non-electronic scoring, page 10).

#### In Reference to Claim 44

A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein at least one umpire is used who is responsible for a respective area of play (1-4 referees, pages 6, 10).

### In Reference to Claim 45

A method as claimed in claim 15 as rejected above and wherein umpires are used to control the combat and include a central umpire (president referee, page 7) and key player umpires assigned to each key player (each player has referees assigned to them, page 6).

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## In Reference to Claim 46

A method as claimed in claim 45 as rejected above and wherein the central umpire oversees combat associated between any players not directly connected with a key player (president referee oversees all action, page 7).

# In Reference to Claim 47

A method as claimed in claim 45 as rejected above and wherein the key player umpires are responsible for judging combat around each key player (side judge for each player, pages 6-7).

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In Reference to Claim 48

A method as claimed in claim 45 as rejected above and wherein one key player umpire becomes senior to the other when both key players are

caught up in the same action (president referee, page 7).

In Reference to Claim 49

A method as claimed in claim 44 as rejected above and wherein umpires

are positioned along side lines of the game area (pages 6, 10).

In Reference to Claim 59

A method of playing a team combat sport, as claimed in claim 14 as

rejected above and further characterized in that individual player

restrictions imposed by the game area are redefined during play based on

the outcome of the team combat (penalty for putting feet off the side edge

of the piste results in the opponent advancing one meter towards the

penalized fencer; Penalties, Page 8).

10. Claims 21, 23, 25-26, 30, 32, 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Wikipedia1 ("Fencing", 6/31/06) as applied to claim 14 above and

further in view of Wikipedia2 ("Dodgeball", 1/20/07).

In Reference to Claim 21

Wikipedia1 teaches:

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above.

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Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

When a player is hit out by an opponent, they may not participate further.

Wikipedia2 teaches:

A similar combative team sport method wherein if players are hit they are

eliminated from the game (page 1).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to have modified the playing method of Wikipedia1 so that if a played

was struck or hit they would be eliminated as taught by Wikipedia2 as an

alternate way of scoring the team event (team with last player standing wins) to

make the game more exciting and entertaining. Also, sudden death type

matches are known in the art (Wikipedia1: direct elimination format, page 13).

In Reference to Claim 23

Wikipedia1 teaches:

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above.

Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

Wherein if a player is hit out, that player can participate again in combat

after a predetermined period of time has elapsed.

Wikipedia2 teaches:

A similar combative team sport method wherein if players catch a ball, a player from the catching team may re-enter the game (page 1).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the playing method of Wikipedia1 to have allowed players to return to the game making the game more exciting and fun.

In Reference to Claims 25-26

Wikipedia1 teaches:

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above.

Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

Wherein if a player is hit by a fellow team member, or hit by themselves, then the player hit is then hit out.

Wikipedia2 teaches:

A similar combative team sport method wherein if players are hit by a live ball (any ball released by a player and not yet hit the ground or has been deflected) they are eliminated from the game (page 1).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the playing method of Wikipedia1 to have allowed any player to be eliminated by their own teams fault to make the game more fun and

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entertaining.

In Reference to Claim 30

Wikipedia1 teaches:

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above.

Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

Wherein each team includes at least six players.

Wikipedia2 teaches:

A similar combative team sport method wherein if players are hit they are eliminated from the game (page 1).

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the playing method of Wikipedia1 to have allowed each team 6 players to allow the match to go on longer and give more players the chance to play.

In Reference to Claim 32

Wikipedia1 teaches:

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above.

Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

Wherein each team includes three forward players, two back players and

one key player (6 players).

Wikipedia2 teaches:

A similar combative team sport method wherein if players are hit they are

eliminated from the game (page 1).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to have modified the playing method of Wikipedia1 to have allowed

each team 6 players to allow the match to go on longer and give more players

the chance to play. Further, once each team has 6 players, any player can be

designated as forward, back, or key players since there is no further limiting

feature that distinguishes the player titles.

In Reference to Claim 40

Wikipedia1 teaches:

A method as claimed in claim 31 as rejected above.

Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

Wherein back players and the key player or key players move together as

a unit unless both back players are hit out in which case the key player

may move independently of the back players (Peek-a-boo strategy).

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Wikipedia2 teaches:

A similar combative team sport method wherein two players work together

to achieve a goal (Peek-a-boo strategy).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to have modified the playing method of Wikipedia1 to have allowed

players to work together to allow the match to more variety and entertainment

and enhance teamwork as taught by Wikipedia2.

11. Claim 42 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Wikipedia1 ("Fencing" 6/31/06) as applied to claim 14 above and further in view of

Lohre US Pat. No. 4,892,303.

In Reference to Claim 42

Wikipedia1 teaches

A method as claimed in claim 14 as rejected above and wherein the

weapon is a sword with a handle section and a blade section (foil, epee,

sabre, pages 4-5) including: (a) a central core common to both the handle

and blade sections; (c) defined blade edges on the blade section

(triangular blade, page 5); (d) a blade cutting edge that is curved along the

length of the blade section (sabre has slightly curved blade, page 5).

Wikipedia1 fails to teach:

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The sword having a rounded cutting edge on the blade section, and the cutting edge having a separate outer layer material.

#### Lohre teaches:

A safety fencing sword that has a rounded blade and has a softer outer blade layer (Fig. 1-2).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the sword used in the game of Wikipedia1 so that the sword was safer and reduced injuries as taught by Lohre (Col. 1 lines 27-32).

### Response to Arguments

- 12. Applicant's arguments filed 8/27/10 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
- 13. As noted in the rejection above, when the claims are read in their broadest reasonable terms, the well known team combat sport of fencing still meets the limitations of the claims as explained above in the rejections of claims 14 and 60.
- 14. Further, though fencing fails to specifically teach multiple players from each team playing against each other simultaneously, it does teach that the teams are combating against each other during the same time period (a match) and that during a match multiple players of both teams would combat each other at the same time (during the match).

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15. Further, Wikipedia teaches that a single player may be challenged by one or more players as each part of the match is one player challenging or being challenged by another as well as a team may substitute another player in the middle of a match ("participants" and "collegiate fencing" headers).

- 16. Further, though there are boundaries that are contacting inside the piste, there are also boundaries that are non-contacting. The claim does not state that all of the boundaries are non-contacting, only that at least two regions have non-contacting boundaries, which the standard piste has.
- 17. Further, in regards to applicant's argument that there was no reason given to combine the two games, the reason the games were combined were "to have allowed players to work together to allow the match to more variety and entertainment and enhance teamwork as taught by Wikipedia2", which is a reason and was cited in this and the last office action. Further, the In response to applicant's argument that there is no teaching, suggestion, or motivation to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness may be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988), *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992), and *KSR International Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398, 82 USPQ2d 1385 (2007). In this case, the reason the games were combined were to have allowed players to work together to allow the match to more variety and

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entertainment and enhance teamwork as taught by Wikipedia2. These games are both team combat sports wherein players from other teams combat the other with the objective to hit out the other player with a weapon. These games may not traditionally be associated with each other, however when it comes down to the general game play of each game, they are in fact very similar.

18. Further, the 101 rejection of all the pending claims has not been overcome as the current claims fail to require that 1) the method be implemented by a particular machine (the method is not implemented by a machine, it is simply played on the court and further, playing court is not a particular machine (a concrete thing consisting of parts) and 2) the method particularly transform a particular article (there is no transformation of an article in the claims). The determination of whether or not the claims are statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101 is still a subjective determination, however because the claims fail to pass the machine transformation test, which is a key factor in determining the eligibility of the claims, it is the office's opinion that the claims in their current state in this case are non-statutory.

#### Conclusion

- 19. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See the references cited page for publications that are noted for containing similar subject matter as the applicant.
- 20. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ALEXANDER R. NICONOVICH whose telephone

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number is (571)270-7419. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eugene Kim can be reached on 571-272-4463. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/A. R. N./
Examiner, Art Unit 3711
/Gene Kim/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3711